



SantaCruz

HOV LANE WIDENING

Increasing Mobility:

A Top Priority in Santa Cruz

If you've driven on State Route 1 (Highway 1) between Aptos and Santa Cruz during commute hours, you know how congested the traffic can be. To address this problem, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCRTC) is working with Caltrans to find alternatives to reduce the congestion and improve safety and operations on this stretch of Highway 1.

The proposed project would extend from San Andreas/Larkin Valley roads in Aptos to Morrissey Boulevard in Santa Cruz. Alternatives for the project are described inside.

In addition to reducing traffic delays and improving operations and safety, the project would improve travel conditions for transit and high occupancy vehicles (HOV) in the project area. Making it easier for pedestrians, bicyclists, and cars to safely cross the highway is also a goal of this project.

- INSIDE
 - Alternatives Under Evaluation
 - Project Limits Map
 - Public Feedback Information



Alternatives Under Evaluation

Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration in cooperation with SCCRTC are considering three build alternatives and a no-build alternative for the Santa Cruz Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project. The build alternatives share these features:

- Auxiliary lanes as needed to help traffic merge on and off the highway between ramps
- Ramp metering at interchanges to control the flow of traffic onto the highway during peak periods
- Retaining walls at appropriate locations to minimize right-of-way acquisition
- Soundwalls to minimize highway noise, while maintaining safety and aesthetic considerations
- New crossings for bicyclists and pedestrians at Mar Vista Drive, Chanticleer Avenue, and Trevethan Avenue
- Transit Market Analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of each alternative in supporting and enhancing transit service
- Transportation Operations Systems with changeable message signs, radio advisories on highway conditions, closed-circuit television, and vehicle detection systems

The following features will be further studied for possible inclusion in the build alternatives:

- Reconstruction of interchanges at Soquel Avenue and Morrissey Blvd.
- Modification of interchanges at State Park Drive, 41st Avenue, and Bay Avenue/Porter Street to tight diamond configurations (see photo below)
- Park and Ride lot enhancements or additions throughout the corridor

Differences between the alternatives are described below.

Build Alternatives

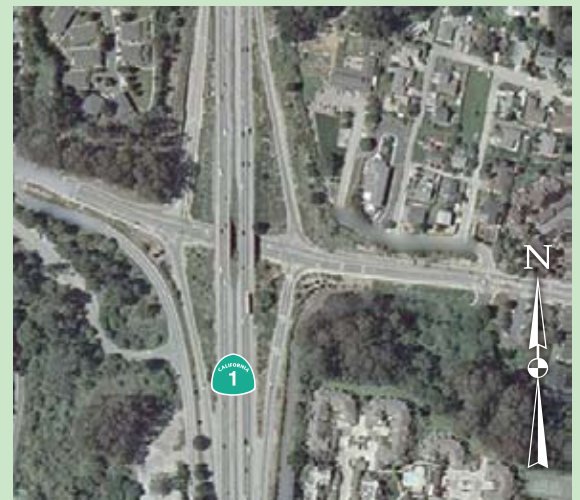
Ramp Metering/Auxiliary Lane: This alternative would provide ramp metering and auxiliary lanes between on and off ramps without requiring reconstruction of the interchange structures, but would not include high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes.

Widen to Six Lanes with HOV Lanes and Standard Shoulder Widths: This alternative includes the construction of HOV lanes to full freeway standards. All interchanges and overcrossings requiring reconstruction would be upgraded for bicyclists and pedestrians to safely cross. The HOV Lane Alternatives would be analyzed to create bus stops within the freeway right-of-way but outside of the freeway lanes and/or adjacent to ramps to increase the effectiveness of transit operators (buses) using the HOV lanes.

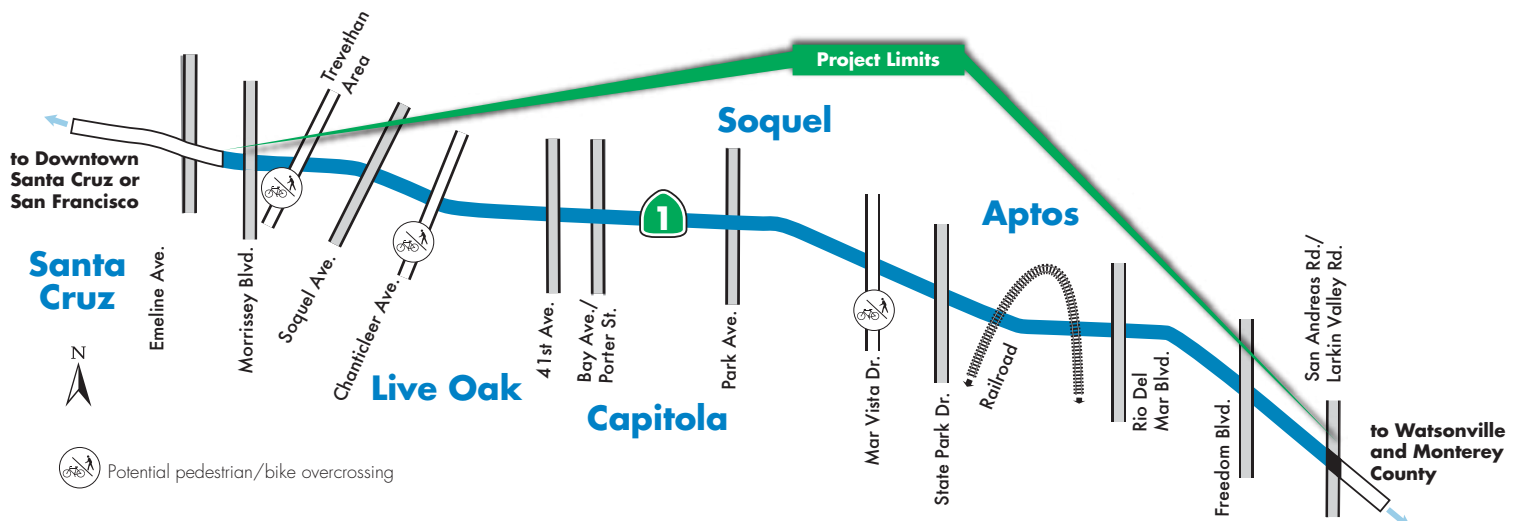
Widen to Six Lanes with HOV Lanes and Reduced Width: This alternative would be similar to the Standard Width alternative, but would reduce shoulder and/or median widths where possible to minimize the cost, “footprint,” and impacts of the project. This alternative would require design exceptions to be approved.

No-Build Alternative

Maintenance of the existing highway would continue in the project area, and related projects on Highway 1 would still be built if approved and funded. The No-Build Alternative does not consider current or future traffic or safety efforts to improve traffic operations on the highway.



Typical Diamond Interchange Configuration



Environmental Studies Underway

Caltrans is overseeing environmental studies for the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project. These studies evaluate and compare potential effects of the project alternatives on the community and the environment. The studies analyze the following issues:

- **Aesthetics • Air Quality**
- **Biological Resources • Cultural Resources**
- **Floodplain/Hydrology • Geological/Seismic**
- **Hazardous Waste • Land Use and Community**
- **Noise and Vibration • Traffic**
- **Utilities and Emergency Services • Water Quality • Wetlands**

When the environmental studies are completed, a Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment summarizing the results of the studies will be circulated for public review. A public hearing will also be held, and you will have an opportunity to make comments, which will become part of the public record. Once the comment period has ended, a Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment that identifies the preferred alternative and responds to public comments will be prepared and circulated for public review.

Cost and Funding

Funding has been secured to complete the environmental studies for the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project. The current estimated cost to construct the full standard HOV Lane Alternative is \$400 million in 2006 dollars. Other alternatives will cost less. Securing the funding for construction will need to be addressed at a later date. Local funding as well as state and federal funds will be needed.

Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Projected Project Milestones

Initial Public Information Meetings.....	Spring 2004
Technical Studies/Alternatives Evaluation.....	Spring 2004 - Winter 2006
Public Information Meetings on Project Status.....	Late September 2006
Prepare Draft Environmental Document.....	Summer 2006 - Fall 2007
Public Review of Draft Environmental Document.....	Winter 2007
Preferred Alternative Selection.....	Summer 2008
Final Design/Right of Way.....	2008 - 2011
Secure Funding for Implementation.....	TBD
If Funding is Secured, Implementation Begins (Construction).....	TBD

Related Projects

Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project

Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration, in cooperation with the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, are currently improving the Highway 1/17 interchange. This project adds and extends merge lanes and reconstructs bridges to address specific safety issues. The project also adds soundwalls and landscaping within the project area.

The project is scheduled for completion in 2009. For more information on the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes project call (831) 423-0396 or visit the project website at www.dot.ca.gov/dist05/projects/scr_1_17/

Highway 1 Soquel Avenue to Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project

This project would add northbound and southbound auxiliary lanes on Highway 1 between the Soquel Avenue and Morrissey Boulevard interchanges. The La Fonda Avenue overcrossing would be rebuilt to accommodate construction of the auxiliary lanes and to improve pedestrian and bicycle access.

The project would improve traffic flow and operations by extending the area for weaving and merging between the two interchanges. The project is proposed by Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration, in cooperation with the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission. This project will require a separate Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

Public Provides Feedback

Two open houses/public information meetings on the Santa Cruz Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project were held during April 2004 to encourage input from the community. Comments centered on the following issues:

Transportation

Comments focused on the need for congestion relief, support for mixed-flow lanes and HOV lanes, interchange and auxiliary lane improvements only, mass transit, and support for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Noise

Noise was a major concern. Some comments requested soundwalls and others preferred the use of vegetation or noise-reducing asphalt.

Landscaping and Aesthetics

Many comments asked for landscaping and public art that reflects the community to be included in the project.

Biology and Water

Others were concerned that the project would create more growth or harm endangered species, plants, or waterways.

Stay Involved

You are invited to visit www.sccrtc.org/highway.htm for the latest project information and to sign up for E-news, the best method to get up-to-date information. Informational Open Houses are planned for late September to provide an update of the project and obtain public comments. Please let us know what you think.

For Additional Information or to Send Questions or Comments

For additional information visit <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist05/projects>

Email your questions and comments to: santa_cruz_hov_project@dot.ca.gov. Or, contact Colin Jones at the Public Information Office at (831) 423-0396. Written comments may be addressed to: Kristen Merrimann, Associate Environmental Planner

California Department of Transportation,
Central Region Environmental, 2015 E. Shields, Suite 100, Fresno, CA 93726.

Para Más Información

Para obtener una copia de este boletín en español, por favor llame al (831) 460-3200.

Agency Roles

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) is the local project sponsor of the Santa Cruz Hwy 1 HOV Widening Project. The SCCRTC, as the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency for the County, takes a leadership role in regional transportation planning, as well as the programming (funding) of projects such as this one. For questions and comments on regional transportation planning and funding, contact the SCCRTC, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060-3911, (831) 460-3200, www.sccrtc.org.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead federal agency responsible for environmental review of highway projects under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Caltrans, as the owner/operator of the state highway system, is the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Lead Agency for the HOV Widening Project. Any questions or comments regarding the CEQA/NEPA process should be directed to Caltrans (contact information in blue shaded area above).

California Department of Transportation

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